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Assistant Director Operations

27 September 1948

Chief, FBIB

FBIB reportage of Tass release on Soviet note of 25 September 1948.

1. On Sunday, 26 September 1948, at about 4 P. M., Mr. Frederick Oechsner of Mr. Lovett's office, telephoned the FBIB wire room to "register his very strong, emphatic protest" over the delay with which his office was notified Saturday night of the Moscow story on the Soviet note to the Western powers. "Every bootblack in town," he said, "had it before [redacted] phoned" him at about 3 A. M. on receipt of the FBIB call. He demanded an "official and thorough investigation" of the reasons for the beating FBIB took from the press associations. "We depend on CIA coverage," he said, and "simply cannot do our work" if this sort of thing is permitted to happen.

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2. After being informed of Mr. Oechsner's call, I came in and investigated the situation. After satisfying myself that all reasonable efforts were being made to cover the negotiations, I called Mr. Oechsner and explained the circumstances. Although clearly disappointed, Mr. Oechsner appeared to understand and indicated that he would not make any further protest.

3. Actually, FBIB performance in covering this release was exemplary, although the press associations may have "scooped" FBIB by a few minutes, presumably by virtue of having received an English-language handset from the "Soviet Monitor" credited to the Moscow radio. Detailed sequence was as follows:

a. FBIB was repeatedly alerted by Mr. Oechsner and other State Department officers (McPherson, Lehrbas, Thayer, Kennan, Miller) after 9:45 A. M. Saturday morning. FBIB field bureaus were alerted, and were in constant touch with the wire room.

b. NBC at Caversham picked up the first broadcast text of the Tass release from Moscow in Spanish at 8:30 P. M. EST Saturday. Soviet Home Service carried it for the first time at 4 A. M. EST Sunday. Tass broadcast it in English Morse at 8:30 A. M. EST Sunday.

c. Press associations carried a brief flash at about 11:30 P. M. EST Saturday, and some time later received full text in time for late editions Sunday morning. FBIB wire room received the text, as translated from the Spanish broadcast, by Western Union at

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27 Sept 48

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2:15 A. M. Sunday, and immediately informed State Department.

4. If the release had been broadcast promptly in English Morse or by other means monitorable in this country, it might have been possible for FBIS to "beat" the press agencies. Such success are not the primary objective of FBIS, however; and its service in this instance is regarded as creditably rapid. The "Voice of America" news desk has expressed satisfaction and appreciation.

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